

Celestial Fiction

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***Chapter 1*: Celestial Fiction**

Celestial Fiction

By Joker's Specter

**My entry for Jake Delfeir's fanfic contest.
-Joker**

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"Take out the Mars Star."

The voice in Isaac's head boomed louder than Sol Sanctum as it crumbled around them. Flecks of dirt and small pebbles showered over him and Garet. In the distance, he heard a large chunk of the ceiling break off and fall to the cracking floor below.

Despite the quaking floor, Isaac managed to pull the Mars Star out of the bag hanging from his side. He held it above his head for The Wise One to see. The beautiful red gem seemed even more radiant with the fiery lava slowly filling the room.

The Wise One hovered closer and narrowed his single eye. A light-blue aura formed around his body, and suddenly the Mars Star began flashing. Isaac was momentarily blinded by the spectacle, but soon it was over.

"Put it back in its bag," the Wise One commanded as Isaac's vision began returning.

As Isaac fumbled with the Mars Star, the Wise One flew around the room trying to seal some of the larger cracks in the floor. Lava sputtered out as the large rock-like figure forced them to close the best he could. Isaac could tell it was difficult.

And then, Isaac's life got a lot more interesting. The Wise One proceeded to tell Isaac about the Elemental Stars, the Lighthouses, and Alchemy. It was as if the boys had been hit with a ton of bricks. They stumbled into something big, and now...there was no way out of it. Jenna and Kraden were kidnapped, and he and Gareth had been left to their deaths in the volcanic mountain.

The Wise One must have been understanding. For a moment, Isaac felt nothing. His body, his mind, his feelings...all were blank. And then just as suddenly as it had started, it ceased, and he and Gareth were outside of the portal.

Run. Flee. Get to safety! That's all Isaac could think and feel. His blank mind surged with feelings of escape. He grabbed Gareth by the collar and ran faster than he had ever thought possible. With luck on their side, the two teenagers managed to get out safely.

And then Isaac's adventure began...

FLASH

Isaac really didn't want to leave his mom or Vale behind. He hesitated for every step. Every moment, every heart beat, and every breath he took he wondered if it was the right thing to do. He didn't believe he would ever be sure. He let out a heavy sigh.

Beside him, Gareth pat his back comfortingly. "Hey now, we can do this. We'll rescue Jenna and Kraden, get back those elemental things, and be back before you know it," he said, giving his best grin. "We've got the Wise One's blessing. What could go wrong?"

Isaac shrugged. "I don't know. To be honest, I'm not worried about us..."

A light bulb turned on in Gareth's head. "Ohhh...our families, huh..." He turned back to look at the direction of his house.

"Yeah, pretty much."

Gareth faced forward again and smiled again. "Well, look at it this way. We learned from them, so if we can take care of ourselves, they can do it at least as well as us. I'm sure they'll be just fine."

A small smile finally appeared on Isaac's face. "Spoken like a true optimist," he said.

"Got that right," Gareth responded with a nod.

FLASH

Meeting Ivan sure was a pleasant experience. The boy seemed to be very observant and intelligent for his age. Throw in the fact that he seems to be an Adept as well, and Isaac was more than happy to allow him to join their quest. He was quite persistent, anyway. Isaac doubted he could turn him away even if he tried.

The smaller blonde teen was amazingly effective in assisting them. Things that Isaac and Gareth overlooked or couldn't do, Ivan was always there for. His abilities had proven useful as

well on a regular basis. And then there was the fact that he packed quite a punch.

"I've never been in a fight of this scale before," Ivan said, pondering on the monsters they had just defeated. "Is it always like this?"

Isaac caught his breath as they began performing his least favorite task: looting the bodies of the defeated monsters. It was always Gareth's idea to do so. Isaac never liked to, but he had to admit that it often paid off well. With a shrug, he said, "Usually."

"I see..."

The older boy eyed Ivan. "Are you getting doubts about joining us?"

Ivan didn't answer at first as he finished searching the body he was at. When he finally did speak, he had a few new coins in his hand. "No. On the contrary, I'm wondering if by defeating as many monsters as we can, we'll be able to help the world in more ways than one."

Isaac raised an eyebrow. He hadn't thought of it that way. It made a lot of sense.

"You're a pretty smart kid, Ivan," Gareth said, who had been listening to their conversation.

Ivan smiled. "I have to make myself of use somehow, don't I?"

FLASH

Gareth's screams of pain filled the night air. Isaac couldn't stand to watch any longer. He turned away.

"Mia, gentle! That hurtsss!" Gareth exclaimed as Mia tended to a wound on his leg. An ambush had put them all through a lot, but Gareth acted as the shield and took as many blows as he could. His heroic actions left him with a few nasty gashes, the worst of which was gushing blood out of his thigh.

Mia brushed her blue hair back. "I'm sorry Gareth...but you'll just have to be patient. Ply can only do so much, and I have to clean the wound before I close it up. Now hold still," she said.

A tiny smile appeared on Isaac's face. Mia fit in perfectly with their little group. She tried her best to help out, too, and took on the role of a healer. Their recovery time was cut down significantly after battles, and now Isaac finally felt like he was catching up to Saturos' group again after losing them at the Mercury Lighthouse.

A blue light shone behind Isaac, indicating Mia's use of her power. Isaac could no longer hear Gareth's grunts of pain, and he assumed her magic once again worked miracles.

Ivan, who had the least injuries out of the three boys, was doing a quick patrol around the area. The group had started working naturally together, and every person had a role to play at all times.

"Your turn, mister leader," Mia said in a sweet, yet teasing, voice. The Venus Adept turned around on the log he was using as a seat to see her standing behind him. In her hand she held a roll of bandages and...Gareth's pants.

Isaac peeked behind her to see Gareth snoring under a blanket. "Did you knock him out?"

Mia hung Gareth's pants on a branch for him, and then sat down on the log and started tending to Isaac's only bleeding wound, which was on his arm. "Well, he wouldn't stop moving, and I do know a few ways of putting patients to sleep quickly..."

"Harsh," Isaac commented. "But I'm sure he needs it."

The Mercury Adept nodded. "So do you. Even though you're leading us, I need you to at least follow my advice when it comes to your health," she stated as she wrapped Isaac's arm.

Isaac's smile returned. "Fair enough. Once Ivan gets back we'll all turn in for the night."

"Those are the Doctor's orders, after all," Mia said with a nod.

FLASH

Reunited....at last. Jenna, Kraden, and even Felix. All of them were there. Isaac was feeling amazing, and he wanted to celebrate. Yet...he couldn't. He had to remain firm. Strong and focused. There was business to take care of. Three Lighthouses had been lit, and Felix needed a miracle of an explanation to convince Isaac why he was doing it.

He ran his eyes over them all. Even Jenna and Kraden were now on Felix's side. What was going on? Here he was trying to rescue them and save the world, yet they wanted to do the very thing he was trying to stop.

FLASH

Isaac couldn't help but grin. What a quest! He'd read stories as a child of heroes going on amazing adventures that tested them in grueling ways as they saved the world. And

now...Isaac *was* the hero. And everything seemed to end perfectly well.

His friends were all alive and in great health. His thoughts went over each of them and how wonderful they were. As time passed, he came to appreciate them more and more. Especially now that they all had a role in saving the world.

Yes, the world had been saved. After a final showdown rivaling the ones in Isaac's books as a kid, they had all four Lighthouses lit. The world would rejuvenate, and with great care they could bring Alchemy back to the world in a peaceful fashion.

That was his next goal.

For now though... He turned to look at his father. He had some lost time to make up.

"Dad..." Isaac said, walking up to him. The two of them were on the deck of the ship, which was flying in the direction of Vale. It wouldn't be much longer until they were there, and Isaac wanted some one-on-one time with his long lost father.

Kyle, who had been looking over the side of the ship thoughtfully, turned to look at his son. "Oh, hey Isaac! How're you doing?"

Isaac stood beside his father and looked over the railing as Kyle had just done. He could see nothing but clouds. "I'm okay," he replied.

Kyle eyed his son, then turned to look at the clouds again. "I see... So, how are you *really* feeling?"

A grin formed on Isaac's face. "Ecstatic. I don't think I've been this happy for a long, long time..."

His father let out a loud laugh. "Of course! Me too, you know. I've missed you so much, Isaac," he turned to look at his son again. "I really can't get over how much you've grown."

Isaac's grin turned into a sheepish smile, "Yeah, well...time will do that to you."

Kyle nodded. "Indeed it will. I expect your journey has helped you, too."

"I suppose... I'm a little stronger," the young Venus Adept replied thoughtfully as he felt his arms.

"Ah, no, that's not what I meant Isaac," Kyle said. "Any person can lift weights to get stronger. The type of thing you've been through, though... That can completely transform a person."

Isaac wasn't sure what his father meant. His expression must've given it away.

Kyle closed his eyes and smiled, then turned around so his back was leaning against the railing of the ship. "I remember before the accident... You were a child. Just a normal child. You complained when you didn't get what you wanted, you cried at times when we had to punish you, and the hardest decisions you had to make were whether you wanted me to buy you one type of candy bar or another."

Memories filled Isaac's head. He remembered all of that.

"And now," Kyle continued, "I don't expect you cry at all. Every day of the journey must have been punishment for you for something you didn't cause, and you've made extremely difficult decisions that most men will never have to make in their lives, all with only a few seconds to decide."

Kyle opened his eyes and faced his son again. "It all turned out well in the end, but you didn't know that it would. You were a leader through and through, and from what I hear, you never complained. You've grown more than almost any person will have the chance to, Isaac."

Isaac was stunned at his father's words. Those were things he had never even noticed about himself, and here his dad was, having almost barely been reunited, putting them into perspective for him.

The older man wrapped his arms around his son. "Thank you Isaac. Thank you for being everyone's hero."

FLASH

Construction didn't seem to be Isaac's strong spot. He pondered this as he looked over the plans for New Vale. Why was he put on the planning team for this?

Garet walked by, hauling some lumber. Sweat was running down his face and he was breathing heavily. "Yo, Isaac. Wanna trade places?"

Isaac looked up from the plans at his lifelong friend. He knew Garet was joking, but for a moment he considered it.

Then he got a better idea. "How about I help you with that," he said, grabbing the tail end of the lumber. They both walked away, chatting about where they would go to eat lunch.

FLASH

Wedding bells rang all throughout New Vale. Isaac looked down the isle at all of the faces seated in chairs. So many

people were in attendance, even from as far as Lumeria. He saw Piers give a wave.

His bride-to-be started walking down the isle. Isaac couldn't help but grin.

Beside him, his best man--Garet--leaned in and whispered with a knowing smile, "I told you you would be the first one to get married."

FLASH

"And here's daddy!" the nurse said as she handed Isaac his new baby girl. He cradled her in his arms. She was so beautiful... He never thought it would be this amazing. The emotions filling up inside him were just too much.

Tears rolled down his cheeks. "I'm proud," he said, "that I was able to help give you a peaceful world to live in."

FLASH

"Isaac! We're going to be late!" Garet shouted as Isaac ran to catch up. "Piers isn't going to wait forever!"

Isaac was jogging at a comfortable pace. He wasn't as young as he used to be and didn't want to wear himself out too quickly. "Don't be dumb, Garet. Piers has all the time in the world," Isaac said.

Garet grinned. "I know, I'm just excited to go visit everyone again! And to see Colosso in Tolbi again, and to see what new food Prox has, and..."

Knowing the Mars Adept would go on if he didn't stop him, Isaac said, "Better hurry up and go tell Piers not to leave!"

Garet shrugged and ran ahead with energy only he still had. Isaac shook his head and smiled. He couldn't blame his friend. He was excited too. After all this time, he was finally going to revisit the world.

FLASH

Isaac couldn't believe he had made it this far. He stood on his balcony and looked out over the new town he helped found and create with his wife and friends. Most of his friends lived there, happily. The town was founded heavily on the idea of using Alchemy for peaceful purposes, and having great synergy with Weyard.

He would fulfill his quest. Much earlier on, he realized it didn't end when Alchemy was unleashed... It would end the moment the world was in perfect harmony with Alchemy, and the Adepts didn't misuse it.

That's the principle his town was founded on. The aging Venus Adept smiled to himself as he watched a few kids play in front of their house.

Isaac would leave his mark on the world.

FLASH

A shiver ran up Isaac's body as he lay in bed. He knew his time had come. Nobody could live forever.

His wife had run out to grab some groceries. She had been tending him all this time, but he expected she knew it as well. Old age was one death nobody could stop forever, even the Lemurians.

Isaac smiled. What a great life he'd lived. So many happy memories and achievements. He made great friends, saved

the world, allowed his parents to have a happy ending together... And in the end, he was able to live out his days peacefully. His town flourished with as much life as Tolbi did in its days of being ruled by Babi.

And now, just as had happened with Babi eventually, it was Isaac's time. He expected to see the reaper at any moment. He would gladly get out of bed and walk with Death to the next life. He felt...accomplished.

"Greetings Isaac," a voice boomed in his head.

The elderly Adept opened his eyes, expecting to see Death's dark visage at his bedside. Even with his blurry vision he could still make out that it was not Death who was in the room with him. His heart began pounding.

"The Wise One..." Isaac said quietly.

The Wise One floated over Isaac's bed. Or, no, more appropriately, Isaac was not in bed anymore. He was in darkness. Nothing surrounded him. It was only him and The Wise One.

Blinking once with his large eye, The Wise One said, "I'm pleased you still remember me. Though, that is to be expected."

"What are you doing here?" Isaac asked curiously. Was he dead now? He had to be if this was going on...

"I am here to reveal something to you. A secret, you could call it. I wish I could leave it as is, but even Gods have things they are forced to do."

Isaac was very confused. What kind of secret would The Wise One want to tell him at the end of his life?

The so-called God blinked again. "I have manipulated you."

Isaac understood now. "Ahh...you mean with my quest. Kraden told me a long time ago what your true purpose was."

The Wise One did something that looked much like shaking in disagreement. "No, not that. Do you remember when I asked you to pull out the Mars Star in Sol Sanctum?" he spoke in Isaac's mind.

The Adept thought back to the moment. "Yes. What about it?"

The Wise One, clearly not being one to ease into a topic, said, "You have not lived past that point."

Once again, Isaac was dumbfounded. He tried to let what the rock just told him sink into his mind, but it just was not possible. "Excuse me?" was all he could reply with.

The Wise One gave the equivalent of a sigh. "I should have realized this would be difficult. The human mind takes time to grasp some concepts. Let me explain it clearly." He paused for a moment to give Isaac time to catch up. "You are still there, in that moment. I have the foresight to realize you can not live past that moment, and I am not allowed to save you."

Isaac shuddered. Was The Wise One messing with him again? "I don't understand. I'm not even the same age as I was back then. I've been living for years and years."

"Wrong. I have given you those memories," The Wise One said. He moved closer to Isaac. "Your life was a fabrication that I gave you so you could die peacefully in the volcano. I

am forbidden to save you and I can see you will not make it out alive."

The Venus Adept still could not grasp it completely. "But...that doesn't make sense. I felt them all physically. I don't just *remember* them. And how come I'm an old man now? And why would you tell me this now of all times?"

The Wise One opened his eye completely. "You do not believe me?"

"How...how can I?"

"Belief or disbelief rests in you. Humans have free agency and as a God I can not change how you think. However, that is also why I could not save your life. Humans make their own choices. It is regretful that yours led to your death so early in your life," said The Wise One in a gentle tone of voice. "I have merely tried to...cushion...your death. To ease you into it."

Isaac was starting to panic. "But...but why are you telling me this now?!"

"Because you will still have to live out your death in the volcano, that can not be avoided." The Wise One closed his eye. "I wanted to prepare you for that moment, Isaac."

The Venus Adept started to shout now. "But what about Garet?! And are you saying my life has been fake? How am I supposed to be prepared for that?!"

"Your young Mars Adept friend has gone through the same treatment. And your life...I suppose physically it was fake. However, it is real to you. You were prepared for death, and that is what is happening now."

"What about Jenna and Kraden? Are you saying we never went after them?" Isaac yelled. He was crying now.

"You did not. However, do not be afraid. Felix will allow no harm to come to them," The Wise One said softly.

"And what about the Lighthouses? And...*everything!*?"

The Wise One came up beside Isaac. His eye was half-opened. "Everything is as it was. I am sorry, I appear to have made a mistake. It worked well with the Proxians who died here three years ago, so I thought it would work just as well with you and Garet."

Isaac stayed there for some time, crouched down and sobbing. Soon the crying stopped and his tears dried. Still, it was a long time before he spoke again.

"Do Mia and Ivan really exist?" he asked quietly.

The Wise One seemed surprised by this question. "They do. The memories I created were as close to accurate as I could get. Had you lived...I expect things would have been very similar."

Isaac stood up, but did not look at The Wise One. "I see..." he said. His throat sounded dry. "I'm...happy about that, at least..."

The Wise One was beginning to understand. "Yes. Your father is alive, too."

A nod from Isaac. "Yeah..."

The two of them stayed there in complete silence for what felt like hours. The Wise One was in no hurry.

Finally, Isaac looked up. "The world...is it safe?"

"For the time being...yes. The Mars Star will be placed back in its proper spot, and as your memories suggested, I will test any person who lights the Lighthouses. It is only a matter of time before someone else comes along."

Isaac remembered all of that... The testing. Or, he thought he did. It was there, but...not real. A sigh escaped his throat.

"I suppose...I'm ready."

The Wise One gave a nod with his body. "Yes, I suppose you are. Forgive me Isaac for not giving you a more peaceful death. I am forbidden to kill, so I can not alter this."

"It's okay..." Isaac said. He closed his eyes and bid goodbye to his happy memories. "Please, do it now..."

FLASH

Isaac kept his eyes shut, but he suddenly felt very hot. The heat was overwhelming.

He knew what that meant.

"Farewell, children," The Wise One's voice echoed through his head.

Isaac's blue eyes opened up, and immediately dried up from the heat waves. Lava started pouring out of the cracks in the ground and flowing freely. Both the Mars Star and The Wise One were nowhere to be seen.

"Isaac..."

The Venus Adept turned to see Gareth standing beside him with a knowing smile. It was weird seeing him young again.

"You too, huh?"

Isaac lowered his head. "Yeah..."

Garet walked up and wrapped his arm around Isaac's shoulder, grinning. "Well, at least we lived a long, happy life."

Unable to resist it, Isaac smiled. Garet's smile had always been infectious.

"See you in the afterlife, buddy," his best friend said. "I'll wait at the pearly gates for ya."

Isaac closed his eyes. "Yeah. See you then, Garet," he said with a quivering voice.

His thoughts turned to his false memories. Mia and Ivan... His father. Jenna, Kraden, Felix, Sheba and Piers... And his mother.

He wished them all a final farewell as Sol Sanctum shook violently. Moments later, it erupted.

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The Wise One could not evacuate Vale, but it didn't matter. The townspeople, who were prepared this time, escaped without losing a single innocent life. The Wise one was thankful for that.

The Mars Star hovered next to him as he watched from above. "It is regretful I can save this gem, yet I can not save something as valuable as a precious human life." He closed his large eye and sighed. He, too, held all the memories of Isaac and Garet. "Isaac... You have left your mark for at least one being," The Wise One stated sadly. "Rest in peace."

End: *Celestial Fiction*
